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CONFIDENTIAL CITE C-189 MAY 71.

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE

SUBJ: ATTACK AGAINST TWO US HELICOPTERS

1. (C) DEPARTURE ROUTE FROM TUNEBIA AIR FIELD (0702N-7207W) PLANNED FOR NORTHERLY COURSE FROM TUNEBIA AIR FIELD TO SANTA DOMINGO BEACON (0736N-7204W) TO PASS WEST OF BEACON THEN NORTH WEST TO CUCUTA. UPON DEPARTURE FROM TUNEBIA AIR FIELD, AIRCRAFT WOULD CIRCLE TWO ADJACENT TOWNS OF TUNEBIA (ABOUT THREE KILOMETERS SOUTH OF TUNEBIA AIRFIELD) AND CUBARA FROM WEST TO SOUTH THEN NORTH ON COURSE.

2. (C) AIRCRAFT DEPARTED TUNEBIA AIRFIELD APPROXIMATELY 271225 MAY LOCAL. APPROXIMATELY 7-10 MINUTES LATER ATTACK OCCURRED. TOATAL TIME LAPSED FROM TURN ON OF ENGINES UNTIL RETURN TO TUNEBIA APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES. HAD JUST REACHED ALTITUDE OF 20000 FEET OVE TE A RAIN AND SPEED OF 90 KM
SWHEN FIRST NON-FIRING PASS MADE BY
ATTACKING AIRCRAFT. FORMATION WAS NUMBER411 LEADING WITH NUMBER 408 REAR AND RIGHT AT 45 DEGREE ANGLE, FIVE HELICOPTER LENGTHS BETWEEN AIRCRAFT.

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3. (C) AT ESTIMATED 10 KMS NORTH OF TOWN OF TUNEBIA, B25 AIRCRAFT PASSED OVER FORMATION APPROXIMATELY 100 FEET APPROACHING FROM EAST TO WEST. B-25 BANKED TO SOUTH AND RETURNED FIRING AT TRAIL HELICOPTER NUMBER 405. FIRE WAS DIRECTED AT HELICOPTER FROM STARBOARD GUN. B25 AIRCRAFT THEN ATTACKED NUMBER 408 FROM EAST TO WEST FIRING FUSELAGE MOUNTED GUNS. PILOT TOOK EVASIVE ACTION AND RETURNED TO TUNEBIA, AIRFIELD. B25 AIRCRAFT WAS SEEN APPROACHING TUNEBIA AIRFIELD FROM EAST TO WEST ON WHAT APPEARED TO BE STRAFFING RUN CAUSING CREW OF NUMBER 408 TO ABANDON SHIP AND SEEK COVER. B25 AIRCRAFT PULLED UP SHORT OF FIELD AND WAS LAST SEEN DEPARTING TO EAST/NORTH EAST. LEAD HELICOPTER, NUMBER 411, TOOK EVASIVE ACTION BUT WAS NEVER ATTACKED, AND LANDED AT TUNEBIA AIRFIELD WITHOUT INCIDENT. NO INJURIES OR DAMAGE OCCURRED AS RESULT OF ATTACKS.

4. (C) BOTH AIRCRAFT DEPARTED TUNEBIA APPROXIMATELY 271330 MAY LOCAL AND PROCEEDED CUCUTA WITHOUT FURTHER SIGHTINGS OR INCIDENTS.

5. (C) COMMENTS:

- A. BOTH HELICOPTERS WERE BRIGHTLY PAINTED IN INTERNATIONAL ORANGE AND WHITE AND CARRIED STANDARD US ARMY MARKINGS.
- B. PILOTS POSITIVE THAT BOTH AIRCRAFT WERE OVER COLOMBIAN TERRITORY AT TIME OF ATTACK.
- C. NO DEFINITE MARKING OTHER THAN SILVER AIRCRAFT WITH SOME ORANGE AND RED PAINT WERE NOTED ON ATTACKING AIRCRAFT. AIRCRAFT POSITIVELY NOTED AS HAVING TWIN VERTICAL TAILS AND IDENTIFIED AS B-25 AIRCRAFT.
- D. AIRCRAFT VIOLATED COLOMBIAN AIR SPACE BY PHYSICAL PRESENCE AND BY FIRING PROJECTILES INTO COLOMBIAN TERRITORY.
- E. PILOTS ALL CONCUR THAT FIRING WAS EFFORT TO DESTROY HELICOPTERS AND NOT A WARNING. NO SIGNALS OR OTHER WARNINGS GIVEN PRIOR TO OPENING ATTACK. SECOND ATTACK ESTIMATED OF THREE SECOND DURATION WITH GUN SMOKE TRAIL ESTIMATED THREE B25 LENGTHS.
- F. BOUNDARIES AND LOCATIONS OF KEY POINTS VARY WITH CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES MAKING PINPOINT LOCATIONS DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE. NO DOUBT EXISTS HOWEVER THAT ATTACKING AIRCRAFT INTRUDED AND VIOLATED COLOMBIAN TERRITORY.
- G. ALL MORNING PAPERS ON 29 MAY CARRY FRONT PAGE STORIES OF INCIDENT WITH CONSIDERABLE MORE FERVOR THAN SEEN IN PREVIOUS FRONTIER INCIDENTS. DIPLOMATIC NOTE REQUESTING EXPLANATION PASSED FROM COLOMBIA TO VENEZUELA. CONVERSATION WITH MAJOR GENERAL DURAN, CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF AND ACTING ARMY COMMANDER EFFECTIVE 29 MAY, INDICATES COLOMBIAN MILITARY AND COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT SERIOUSLY CONCERNED OVER

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